Press release

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New move brings offshore forecast boost

31 July 2001

The Met Office Aberdeen has moved to a new specialised facility in its bid to continue providing Britain's offshore oil industry with the most accurate and sophisticated forecasts possible.

The new facility, at the Aberdeen Science and Technology Park, will strengthen the Met Office's excellent reputation for providing detailed marine weather forecasts to an industry it has worked closely with since the late 1960s.

The sophisticated new facilities mean that forecasters are able to receive much higher volumes of data — essential to monitoring the weather and providing the most accurate forecasts possible to a highly weather-sensitive industry where rig hire alone often costs more than £100,000 a day and where safety is paramount.

Met Office Strategic Sales Manager Alan Motion said: "Our forecasts are vital for our customers' business continuity and for the safety of workers who are carrying out extreme feats of engineering on a day-to-day basis, in one of the most inhospitable operating environments in existence.

"The information that we provide on wind, wave and general weather conditions enables operations managers to make decisions on whether their teams can continue to operate. This is especially important when conditions are marginal."

The Met Office provides forecasts to oil industry operators, contractors and drillers including Shell U.K. Exploration and Production, and TotalFinaElf Exploration UK PLC. Forecasts are produced for the UK, Norwegian and Dutch sectors of the North Sea and Atlantic margin. Forecasts can also be provided on a global scale – the team in Aberdeen recently provided weather forecasting for a project that required a rig to be towed from Norway to Alabama and back.

Said Motion: "The extreme conditions experienced out there means our clients need accurate and reliable information, so they demand very high standards from their suppliers. Clients like these stretch our expertise to the limit and we will continue to rise to the challenge."

The Met Office Aberdeen — which employs 30 people in forecasting, management, sales and marketing and offshore data collection — is located at Davidson House, Campus 1, Aberdeen Science and Technology Park, Bridge of Don, Aberdeen AB22 8GT.

If you wish to discuss offshore forecast services please contact Alan Motion on 01224 407552. Alternatively, for general weather forecast services please call the Met Office Customer Centre on 0870 900 5454.

To arrange to visit the new Met Office Aberdeen facility or for pictures and interviews contact: Sarah Graham or Liz Fay at QBO on 020 7379 0304.

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